

Motorists to be hit in new transport plan

\$11,000m TO EASE ROAD JAM

A \$11,000 MILLION transport development project, and progressive curb on private motorists have been presented to the Government by its consultants Wilbur Smith and Associates as a package deal to relieve the worsening traffic congestion.

The Wilbur Smith plan published yesterday culminated three years work on an integrated transport system as part of the Government's Comprehensive Transport Study. It cost the Government \$8 million.

The major proposals of the plan are:

\$4,000 MILLION expansion of road network;

\$5,500 MILLION extension of the metro beyond its present scope;

\$1,500 MILLION for electrifying and double-tracking of the Kowloon-Canton Railway;

INCREASE private car registration fee from its present average of \$610 to \$2,632;

FOUR-FOLD increase in parking fees; and,

DOUBLE the taxi fare.

All these, the report based on nine computer tests said, are necessary if an acceptable level of mobility is to be assured for both people and goods.

The Wilbur Smith experts also pointed out that even if the proposed restraint policy is implemented the number of private cars will reach 280,000 by 1991 and private cars and taxis by that year will share 60 per cent of the road travel.

The experts who worked under the guidance of the Government Steering Group set up in 1973, made their forecasts of travel demand in stages calculating step by step transport needs and the transport best suited to meet them.

They, however, said that the massive investment proposed for the transport development plan and the squeeze on private motorists are to be introduced gradually with careful phasing and close monitoring.

A number of other recommendations were published in the report including continued use of franchised buses as the main form of public transport.

At a press conference yesterday one of the consultants, Mr J.S. Gaines, said that a major aim of the study was to enable the Government to

"keep on top of the transport situation and add improvements."

Another consultant, Mr R.H. Hubbard, said that in future years there would still be traffic congestion and priority had to be given to clearing the bottle-neck areas and the core areas in Central and Kowloon.

The Secretary of the Environment, Mr Derek Jones, meanwhile, said that a white paper on transport policy will be drawn up by the middle of next year after a review of the Wilbur Smith report.

He said Government would be looking for public response before drawing up the paper but stressed that only "sensible" views would be considered.

"There is bound to be opposition from certain interests but we must cater for the interests of the majority against the minority," he said.